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ABSTRACT

Most teachers today are faced with increasing pressure to teach to higher academic standards. This focus on academic achievement has led many teachers, against their better judgment, to reduce their attention to students' social and ethical growth and to building relationships with and among their students. The result of a collaboration between an educational psychologist and a classroom teacher, this book draws on their in-depth case study in an inner-city classroom to demonstrate the power and importance of caring, trusting relationships for fostering not only children's social and ethical development, but their academic growth as well. The book applies attachment theory to the school setting, showing how this perspective can help teachers build collaborative, trusting relationships, even with their most challenging students. The book explores strategies for helping children develop the emotional skills needed to live harmonious and productive lives, the social and communication skills to be a friend and work collaboratively with classmates, the self confidence and curiosity to invest wholeheartedly in learning, and the empathy and personal and moral understanding to be caring and responsible young people. Following an introduction providing an overview of the classroom studied and the challenges therein, the chapters in the first part of the book examine building trust: building the teacher-student relationship, teaching children how to be friends, and building the classroom community. Chapters in the second part address managing the classroom within the framework of trust: meeting students' needs for competence and autonomy, managing mistakes and misbehavior, and addressing competition in the classroom. Chapters in the third section explore helping students find their "real selves" once trust has been established, and lessons from the case study on finding the conditions for success. Each chapter concludes with a summary of key points. Two appendices include an

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essay on the application of attachment theory to education, and an annotated list of resources related to building community and fostering caring classroom relationships. (Contains 127 references.) (HTH)

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